LOGIC ANALYZER DATA RETRIEVING CIRCUIT AND ITS RETRIEVING METHOD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention:

The present invention relates to a logic analyzer data retrieving circuit and its retrieving method and, more particularly, to such a logic analyzer data retrieving circuit, which is capable of retrieving a complete clock enable signal and, which enables the user to know the time interval between two clock enable signals.

2. Description of the Related Art:

Nowadays, most electronic apparatus are digitalized. Conventional oscilloscopes are not suitable for examining sophisticated electronic apparatus for being not capable of measuring signals having more than 8~16 channels. An ICE (in circuit emulator) solves many digitalizing problems. However, a software development-oriented ICE cannot manage a real time sequencing problem. Further, an ICE is adapted to fit a particular microcomputer system. Due to the aforesaid reasons, most engineers use a logic analyzer as one of the requisite measuring instruments. A logic analyzer can indicate the desired data by a format, so that the user can conveniently show the process of the action of a digital circuit on the screen of the logic analyzer.

Regular logic analyzers include two analyzing modes, one

is the asynchronous mode or the so-called "time sequence analysis", and the other is the synchronous mode or the so-called "status analysis". The on-screen waveform display method of the asynchronous mode is similar to an oscilloscope. According to the synchronous mode, the sampled clock signal is provided by the test sample. As indicated, the time sequence analysis mode and the status analysis mode use different sampling clocks. Under the status analysis mode, we use the signal from one particular channel as sampling clock (normally, the clock of the test sample). The sampling clock can be a combination of signals from different channels. Further, the use may assemble a clock signal in the circuit to be tested, and then send the clock signal to the logic analyzer for use as a sampling clock. Under the time sequence analysis mode, there are two different sampling methods available. The first sampling method is "continuous storing mode", in which the logic analyzer has a constant sampling clock that is continuously sampling and continuously storing in memory. The second sampling method is "state transition sampling mode", which enables use to effectively utilize limited memory. When sampling, it does not store data. However, it stores the transited state and the time between the last two transitions each time a state transition is detected. This method does not save much memory space when state transition is frequent. However, it saves much memory space

and improves the resolution if the signal is composed of a number of bursts and the time in which the state remains unchanged is long.

Another useful function of a logic analyzer is the qualifier. There are two different qualifiers, namely, the trigger qualifier and the clock qualifier. Trigger qualifier is subject to a particular condition, i.e., it occurs only when the condition of letter recognition simultaneously occurred. Trigger qualifier enables the user to add an additional condition to trigger. Clock qualifier is used to limit sampling clock. By means of clock qualifier, the user can select data to be stored in the memory, preventing occupation of memory space by unnecessary data. This method enables the memory space of the memory to be used effectively. FIGS. 1~3 show the arrangement of a logic data analyzer, and the related data retrieving circuit and waveform according to the prior art. The logic analyzer **A10** comprises control circuit **A11** and a memory (for example, SRAM) **A12**. When the control circuit **A11** received examination data from the test sample **A30**, it stores received data in the memory **A12**. When the memory space of the memory **A12** used up (fully occupied), the control circuit **A11** transmit storage data from the memory **A12** to an external computer system **A40** through a communication interface **A20**, enabling the data to be displayed on the display screen of the computer system **A40** for check visually. According to this design, inputted clock and clock

qualifier are processed through an AND gate into an output of qualified clock. The logic analyzer uses this qualified clock as sampling clock to catch the desired data. However, because the AND gate is a logic operator of binary system, the result will be "Hi" when the two clock enables are "Hi". If the two clock enables are not all "Hi", the result will be "Lo". At this, as shown in FIG. 3, the received amount of data is reduced, however the important ready signal is still not obtainable. Due to this reason, the waveform data is incomplete when the retrieval qualified, resulting in the following drawbacks:

1. The user cannot see the complete waveform after qualification.
2. The user cannot know the time difference between two sampled clocks.

Therefore, it is desirable to provide a logic analyzer data retrieving circuit that eliminates the aforesaid drawbacks.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention has been accomplished under the circumstances in view. It is therefore the main object of the present invention to provide a logic analyzer data retrieving circuit and its retrieving method, which eliminates the aforesaid drawbacks.

According to one aspect of the present invention, the logic analyzer data retrieving method is used in a logic analyzer comprised of a control unit, a memory unit, and a data retrieving

circuit. The data retrieving circuit obtains a qualified clock when received a clock signal and a clock qualifier signal, for enabling the control unit to catch test data from a test sample been connected thereto subject to the qualified clock, and to store caught test data in the memory unit and then to transfer test data from the memory unit to the display screen of an external computer system for examination. The logic analyzer data retrieving method comprises the step of driving the data retrieving circuit to receive a time delay default value and to store the time delay default value in a buffer in a time delay circuit, and the step of triggering the preset of a first counter and transferring the default value from the buffer to the first counter to drive the first counter to start counting when a clock qualifier signal entered, so as to obtain a complete clock enable signal when the first counter counted up to the default value and the output of the clock enable became low. According to another aspect of the present invention, the logic analyzer data retrieving method further comprising the step of triggering the reset of a second counter of the control circuit to cause the second counter to start counting till appearance of a next clock enable signal when a complete clock enable ended, and the step of storing the value of the second counter in the memory unit when the second counter stopped the counting and then displaying the value on a display screen.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a circuit block diagram according to the prior art.

FIG. 2 is a schematic drawing showing a clock signal and a clock qualifier signal processed into a qualified clock signal according to the prior art.

FIG. 3 is a schematic drawing showing a waveform obtained according to the prior art.

FIG. 4 is a circuit block diagram of a logic analyzer according to the present invention.

FIG. 5 is a circuit block diagram of the data retrieving circuit according to the present invention.

FIG. 6 is a schematic drawing showing a waveform obtained according to the present invention.

FIG. 7 is a circuit block diagram of an alternate form of the logic analyzer according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to FIG. 4, a logic analyzer **10** is shown comprising a control unit **11**, a memory unit (for example, SRAM) **12**, and a data retrieving circuit **13**. When the data retrieving circuit **13** received a clock signal and a clock qualifier signal, it outputs a qualified clock to the control unit **11**. Upon receipt of the qualified clock, the control unit **11** uses the qualified clock as a sampling clock to catch test data from the test sample **30**, and then to store

caught test data in the memory unit **12**, and then to transfer storage test data from the memory unit **12** to an external computer system **40** through a transmission interface **20** when the memory space of the memory unit **12** used up (fully occupied), enabling the test data to be displayed on the display screen of the computer system **40** for examination.

Referring to FIG. 5 and FIG. 4 again, when obtained a qualified clock, i.e., sampling clock, the user uses the control circuit **131** of the data retrieving circuit **13** to store a predetermined time delay default in the buffer **1321** of a delay circuit **132**. When one or more test signals **301** entered, the user can use a trigger assembly logic circuit **133** to select edge trigger or level trigger for triggering, enabling the entered test signal **301** to output a clock qualifier signal to trigger preset. When preset triggered, the default value is transmitted from the buffer **1321** to a first counter **1322** causing the first counter **1322** to start counting. At this time, the output of clock enable is "Hi". When the first counter **1322** counted up to the default value, the output of clock enable is changed from "Hi" to "Lo", providing a complete clock enable, which comes with clock input through an AND gate **134** to provide a qualified clock, namely, the sampling clock, which is then transmitted to the control unit **11**, enabling the control unit **11** to catch the complete waveform of the test sample **30**. Therefore, the logic analyzer **10**

receives a sampling clock input only during clock enable period, filtering unnecessary data.

Further, when a complete clock enable signal ended, the reset of a second counter **1312** of the control circuit **131** is triggered (zeroed), thereby causing the second counter **1312** to start counting up to the time when a next clock enable signal comes. Therefore, the value of the second counter **1312** is stored in a memory **1311** of the control circuit **131**, and the value of the second counter **1312** been stored in the memory **1311** of the control circuit **131** is displayed on the display screen, enabling the user to know the time interval between the two clock enable signals.

Further, an OR gate may be used instead of the aforesaid AND gate **134**.

Referring to FIG. 6, when a series of clock qualifiers processed through the data retrieving circuit **13**, a complete clock enable signal **C1,C2,C3** is obtained. As illustrated, the qualified clock output is produced only when a clock enable signal available, and the important ready signal is retrieved when the qualified clock output produced. However, the appearance of TD (time delay) in the time enable signal represents the time delay set by the user. Due to the effect of TD, the series of clock qualifiers forms a complete clock enable signal. Further, T1 in the clock enable signal represents the time interval between two clock enables **C1** and **C2**.

FIG. 7 shows an alternate form of the present invention. According to this embodiment, the logic analyzer **10** comprises a control unit **11**, a memory unit (for example, SRAM) **12**, and a data retrieving circuit **13**. When the data retrieving circuit **13** received a clock signal and a clock qualifier signal, it outputs a qualified clock to the control unit **11**, causing the control unit **11** to catch test data from the test sample **30** subject to the sampling clock, i.e., the qualified clock. The control unit **11** further stores test data in the memory unit **12**, and then writes storage test data from the memory unit **12** into a buffer **15**, and then transfers test data from the buffer **15** to a display **14** of the logic analyzer **10** for review.

A prototype of logic analyzer data retrieving circuit and its retrieving method has been constructed with the features of the annexed drawings of FIGS. 4~7. The logic analyzer data retrieving circuit and its retrieving method functions smoothly to provide all of the features discussed earlier.

Although particular embodiments of the invention have been described in detail for purposes of illustration, various modifications and enhancements may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. For example, the logic analyzer may be made having two or more data retrieving circuits. Accordingly, the invention is not to be limited except as by the appended claims.